

WYCOMBE STUCK IN THE MUD!

SO IT was not to be. Wycombe Wanderers' hopes of repeating their 1974 F.A. Cup shock over Bournemouth disappeared in the mud at Loakes Park on Saturday.

All the confident predictions came to nought as the Fourth Division side, determined to exact revenge, did so in the most clinical fashion in conditions which favoured the fitter and stronger side.

Wycombe battled away well and for a long time held territorial advantage, but their opponents' strength and cool finishing proved too great for a side who thus suffered their first home defeat in 15 matches.

Intermittent heavy rain which turned the pitch in places to a quagmire, could not deter about 5,000 spectators from watching a great occasion, but any hopes of a great giant-killing act had virtually disappeared by half-time.

Rattled

By that stage the Cherries were two goals up and try as they might, Wycombe could not pull back the deficit, and with rapidly tiring limbs could well have conceded more in the second half.

Wycombe's great need was for an early goal, something that could have really rattled Alec Stock's enthusiastic young side.

The chance presented itself after eight minutes, when Gary Lester's long clearance was transferred quickly by Steve Long and Tony Price to put leading scorer Terry Glynn in the clear.

Glynn did nothing wrong, shooting for goal at once. But the ball unluckily struck the legs of goalkeeper Kenny Allen and was cleared for a corner.

Allen was kept busy for the first ten minutes, saving direct shots from Long and

By MICHAEL KNOX Wycombe 0, Bournemouth 3

George Borg, but it was Bournemouth who scored first following a quick break upfield — so many of the goals Wycombe conceded come this way.

Bournemouth kept John Evanson wide out on the right at the top of the hill throughout the first half and this move paid off in the 14th minute.

Evanson broke away down the right and then crossed beyond the far post. Nigel Spackman headed back into the middle where both Trevor Morgan and Massey found themselves unmarked. Massey, it was, who tapped in easily from close range.

Wycombe more than held their own for the rest of the half, having much of the play, but creating precious few chances. Both Price and Dell had shots blocked while Glynn put a lobbed shot just over the bar.

The more direct chances fell Bournemouth's way. Tommy Heffernan fired wide from close in while only a fine dive from Lester stopped Massey adding a second.

The Blues seemed set to go at half time trailing only by a single goal when disaster struck in the 44th minute.

All this season Wanderers have employed an effective

off-side trap but this time it let them down. The linesman kept his flag down as Morgan raced on to Heffernan's through pass, and placed the ball wide of the oncoming Lester.

Borg was so furious with the decision and protested so vehemently that he found his name going into the referee's book for his fifth yellow card of the season. It may just have been that Borg himself had played Morgan on-side.

In any case Wanderers trailed by two goals at the interval — somewhat unluckily in my view. But a goal immediately after the break could have set the game alight.

But although they had plenty of possession they could rarely find a way through the Bournemouth defence, capably marshalled by the former Chelsea F.A. Cup hero Dave Webb.

No consolation

The conditions were against Wycombe's attractive one touch football, with the ball often becoming stuck in the mud. The Football League side, in contrast, let the ball do the work and relied on the quick break.

Against a rapidly tiring

Wycombe defence, this tactic became more and more effective. Spackman should have scored after Heffernan hit a post but they made absolutely sure with a goal 13 minutes from the end.

Steve Hardwick failed to cut out a pass down the middle and Massey and Morgan exchanged passes before Morgan tapped the simplest of goals past Lester.

That was that. It would have been nice if Wanderers had managed a consolation goal in front of the B.B.C. Television news cameras. Gary Toll, substituting for Dell, and Jacobs both went close but the home fans had no more to cheer.

So Wycombe's F.A. Cup run is over for another year. But they let nobody down. Indeed they forced seven corners to their opponents' six. But the greater fitness of the full-time professionals finally told against Wycombe's part-timers.

WYCOMBE: G. Lester; P. Birdseye, G. Borg, R. Davies, S. Hardwick, R. Dell (sub: G. Toll 66 mins), S. Long, J. Jacobs, T. Glynn, A. Price, M. Holifield.

BOURNEMOUTH: K. Allen; I. Cunningham, J. Moore, J. Impey, T. Heffernan, D. Webb, P. Ferns, N. Spackman, T. Morgan, S. Massey, J. Evanson. Sub: M. McGrath (not used).

Referee: V. G. Callow (Solihull).
Half-time: 0-2. **Scorers:** Bournemouth-Massey (14 mins), Morgan 2 (44, 77).
Attendance: 4,768.

'We needed early goal'

MIKE Keen said afterwards: "We needed the lift of an early goal. If Terry Glynn had scored from that chance, it would have made a world of difference.

"I was slightly disappointed in the performance of our front three who can play better. But Bournemouth defended well and supported well in attack. The conditions may have favoured them as well. But as I know from experience any team run by Alec Stock is well organised.

Wycombe captain Paul

Birdseye agreed. "They are the hardest working Football League side I have played against, and that includes Middlesbrough. After all, it was a big game for them as well."

Wycombe had their greatest ever audience on Saturday night. Five short extracts of the match were shown on BBC1 news, just before the much publicised episode of Dallas, which must have attracted one of the biggest viewing figures of the year. Pity Kristen was not shooting for Wycombe!

The attendance of 4,768 was about 2,500 down on the crowd that watched the corresponding game six years ago — a dramatic indication of the falling football gates.

The Wycombe players were by no means disheartened after their display. But some were slightly disappointed that no member of the committee came into their dressing room after the match.

Referee Vic Callow handled the game in expert fashion, though some fans argue about the support he received from his linesmen.